(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have consulted the State Government and Autonomous Councils of the concerned State regarding this proposals;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what steps are being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Gap between rich and poor

†1644. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the gap between the rich and the poor has widened in India during the last five years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action being taken by Government to remove this gap?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) The Planning Commission estimates the number and percentage of poor from the large sample surveys on consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years. The last such survey was conducted in 1993-94. As such, it is not possible to ascertain change in the gap between the poor and the non-poor during the last five years. However, comparing two latest

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

estimates of consumer expenditure data obtained for the years 1987-88 (NSS 43rd Round) and 1993-94 (NSS 50th Round), it is observed that the ratio of per capita consumption of the non-poor to poor declined from 2.30 in 1987-88 to 2.22 in 1993-94 in rural areas and from 2.76 to 2.70 during the same period in urban areas.

(c) The gap between the poor and non-poor is attempted to be reduced through acceleration of economic growth and direct income generation of the poor bypassing the general growth process, through employment and income generating programmes and assets-building.

Developmental assistance for North-Eastern Region

1645. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is no growth or development assistance in North-East despite increasing Central assistance in the current financial year; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES OF THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) No, Sir. In fact, the North-Eastern States have achieved higher literacy rate and lower crude birth/death rate and infant morality rate than the All-India average. However, the growth in per-capita Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) at constant prices (1980-81) of these States during the period 1992-93 to 1996-97 ranged between 1.63% (Assam) and 7.19% (Tripura), as compared to 5.33% recorded at the national level. The major factors contributing to the slow growth in per-capita income in these States are:

(i) Higher level of administrative cost.

(ii) Poor resource base.

(iii) Increasing security related expenditure.

(iv) Under-utilization of funds available under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes owing to inadequate provision in Annual Plans to meet the States' shares.